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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 11 TASHKENT 000352

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SMIG, UZ

SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN INFORMATION FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

REF: STATE 202745

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) Post,s submission for the seventh annual
Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report begins in paragraph 4.
This information covers the period from March 2006 to March
¶2007. The information provided in the report has been
gathered from numerous sources, including the GOU,
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Tashkent
Office, the International Organization for Migration (IOM),
USAID, local TIP-focused NGOs, and local press reports.

¶2. (SBU) Embassy Tashkent's TIP point of contact is:

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Political/Economic Officer
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¶3. (SBU) Number of hours spent on report preparation:

P/E officer: 30 hours
Consul: 1 hour

USAID: 3 hours
PAS: 1 hour
DCM: 2 hours

14. (SBU) Post's response is keyed to the questions provided in paras 27-30 of reftel:

OVERVIEW

1A. Uzbekistan is a source country, and to lesser extent a transit country, for trafficking in persons. Statistical data and information on trafficking activities and trends are scant and incomplete. An International Organization for Migration (IOM) study completed in fall 2005 estimated that over half a million Uzbeks are victims of trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation annually. The study, which was funded by USAID, cited the absence of effective mechanisms to regulate labor migration as a key factor in exacerbating the labor trafficking problem. The study also noted that 90% of the surveyed victims of sexual exploitation hide the truth of their experience from friends and relatives. There are no comprehensive statistics available on the extent or magnitude of the problem. The available sources of information regarding TIP are: the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Uzbek Border Guards, Customs Committee, General Prosecutor's Office, media sources, private citizens, human rights activists, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Tashkent office, International Organization for Migration (IOM), TIP-focused NGO Istiqbolli Avlod, and various other NGOs working on TIP. Since the Andijon violence in May 2005, the Uzbek Government, including law enforcement and judicial

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officials, has been less willing to meet with U.S. Embassy officials to discuss TIP and many other issues.

Men are mainly trafficked to illegal labor markets in Kazakhstan and Russia, generally in the construction, agricultural (tobacco and cotton), and service sectors. An IOM report published in May 2005 highlighted an increase in labor trafficking from Uzbekistan to southern regions of Kazakhstan. It noted that the majority of these migrants work without contracts, receiving only partial or in some cases no pay for their labor. Victims of labor trafficking typically cross the border by truck or bus to Kazakhstan. There have also been reports of men being taken by train to Russia and Ukraine. Kyrgyzstan is also a labor trafficking destination, according to NGO and GOU sources. NGO and GOU sources reported that Shymkent, Kazakhstan; Moscow, Russia; Baku, Azerbaijan; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Osh, Kyrgyzstan served as transit points. Under Uzbek law, the only permitted form of overseas employment is through contracts arranged through the Ministry of Labor. The Ministry arranges for thousands of Uzbek citizens to work abroad. The majority of contracts are for jobs in South Korea. All other labor migration is illegal, and the Government has prosecuted individuals for working illegally abroad. Potential migrant workers must seek middlemen to facilitate employment abroad, thus opening the door to traffickers. Since 2002, Uzbekistan has occasionally restricted overland travel by its citizens to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Many individuals traveling for employment cross the border illegally.

Uzbekistan is a source country for both labor and sexual trafficking. The typical sexual trafficking victim in Uzbekistan is a young woman (age 17-30). According to NGOs, the Government, the media, and information gathered by the Embassy, most female victims of sexual exploitation were trafficked to the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Russia, Thailand, Turkey, Israel, India, Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan. Many reports of women being trafficked abroad indicate that the victims traveled by air and left from Tashkent. There have also been many reports indicating that

some women travel first to Kyrgyzstan to obtain false documents and then depart from Osh. Many victims have been unwilling to become involved in legal proceedings that could result in their testimony becoming public due to both societal pressure and the fear of retaliation from their traffickers. Victims are also well aware that under Uzbek law, female smugglers convicted of most first criminal offenses are automatically amnestied. Because many human traffickers are women, this practice further discourages victims from participating in legal proceedings. Uzbekistan is a transportation hub for travel to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has led to transiting of trafficked persons from neighboring countries.

According to the Government and NGOs, internal trafficking generally takes place from rural to urban areas. Internal trafficking exists in agriculture, construction, domestic servitude, and other forms of unskilled labor. Methods used

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include withholding of pay and/or identity documents, such as passports. In order to work legally in a particular region or city, a citizen must register with the local administration and obtain a permission stamp in his or her passport. Those living and working in a city without that stamp are doing so illegally and are subject to fines, jail time, and removal from the city. Traffickers threaten to inform the police of people who are working illegally. This is especially true in Tashkent city. According to IOM, sex trafficking most often originates in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand, while labor trafficking originates mainly from Karakalpakstan, Surkhandarya and Samarkand. IOM also has reported increased sex and labor trafficking from the Fergana Valley.

The GOU has stated that labor trafficking constitutes the majority of cases and that trafficking for sexual exploitation has increased. Information provided by NGOs and media reporting suggests that both labor and sexual trafficking are increasing, particularly as economic conditions deteriorate. There is anecdotal evidence that in many villages with high unemployment most of the men have left to work abroad, leaving only the elderly, women, and children. However, there are no comprehensive data definitively showing this upward trend. One high level GOU official said that little can be done to stop trafficking, since, in many cases, people can only find work abroad. This official and others have acknowledged that the deterioration of the economy is making the fight against trafficking more difficult.

1B. Often traffickers make contacts with the victims through family members. Several victims have said that their friends introduced them to recruiters. Traffickers are also known to pose as entrepreneurs and businesspeople. Agents in nightclubs or prostitution rings solicit women, some of whom are already engaged in prostitution. Victims are offered jobs and decent salaries relative to low local salaries. Labor trafficking victims are typically moved across the border to Kazakhstan by bus or truck, or to Russia by train, whereas sexual trafficking victims are often given plane tickets and are met by their future trafficker upon arrival in the destination country. False documents are being used to move some victims, particularly from Osh, Kyrgyzstan.

Government officials continue to actively cooperate with NGOs in fighting TIP. This is evidenced by the participation of Government officials in anti-TIP training, the nationwide educational campaign, and the direct cooperation of Government officials with TIP-focused NGOs. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a special criminal investigation unit and a criminal prevention unit tasked with preventing TIP. There is a willingness to take action against Government officials linked to TIP, especially at the lower provincial level where corruption is common. Recognizing its own

limited resources, the Government is willing to make use of others' resources (NGOs and international organizations) to fight TIP.

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The Government inter-agency working group on TIP, formerly supported by the OSCE with INL funding, has been inactive since mid-2005. The MVD's specialized Anti-Trafficking Unit has taken consistent measures to fight trafficking. Officials from the MVD, Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Labor, are also cooperating with NGOs in a public information campaign to raise awareness. The draft action plan to combat TIP remains with the Presidential Apparatus. The Government continues to direct border guards at airports to give more scrutiny to unaccompanied young women traveling to the UAE, Turkey, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia; it authorizes them to deny such women permission to leave the country. Likewise, the Office of Passports and Exit Visas under the MVD has ordered its officers to scrutinize applications of young men and women traveling abroad for work.

1C. Government officials addressing the issue of trafficking must cope with cultural taboos, corruption, lack of resources, and poorly developed criminal investigative techniques. Progress has been made on overcoming cultural taboos in discussing sexual trafficking; officials at both the local and national level have addressed the topic publicly. However, labor trafficking is still a delicate subject that many Uzbek officials do not wish to discuss in depth. They will admit it is a problem, but go no further. Lack of funds and human resources greatly limits the Government's ability to address TIP. Even though officials have addressed the problem publicly, they lack experience and expertise on combating TIP. There are no available statistics regarding the number of Government officials involved directly or indirectly in TIP. However, overall corruption is a problem. The MVD and the Prosecutor's Office have both received U.S. Government training in criminal investigative techniques, including the handling of crime witnesses and victims.

The Government has not allocated sufficient funding to support many prevention and education programs. Government officials have been working closely with TIP-focused NGOs supported by IOM and USAID to establish prevention programs. The Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has continued to develop an assistance and repatriation program designed to make it easier for Uzbek trafficking victims abroad to return. In some cases the time frame for identifying victims and issuing certificates of return has been reduced from six months to two weeks, eliminating long detentions; often this has been the result of close cooperation with a local NGO. One NGO reported that the police, MFA, Consular Department, border guards, and overseas diplomatic missions began notifying it of women returning from abroad who appeared as if they might be victims of trafficking. The NGO is regularly allowed to assist groups of women returning from abroad at the airport and help them through entry processing. In Karakalpakstan, the MVD has distributed brochures warning of the dangers of trafficking and provided other travel-related information to all first-time passport recipients. The brochures are available in Russian, Uzbek and Karakalpak.

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1D. (SBU) The GOU regularly monitors anti-trafficking efforts conducted by relevant ministries. MVD, prosecutors, and MFA officials speak publicly about trafficking during speeches, news releases, and news conferences. Often the speeches take place during training sessions on combating TIP. IOM started anti-trafficking operations in Tashkent in 2003. IOM's local

NGO partners operate ten TIP-focused hotlines throughout Uzbekistan, which received over 16,406 calls in 2006.

PREVENTION

1A. The GOU has repeatedly acknowledged publicly that TIP exists and is a problem in Uzbekistan. It has done this during press conferences, as well as anti-TIP training seminars and conferences. The Government expresses concern that trafficking may become a serious problem if not comprehensively addressed. The Government is clear that the trafficking problems that have arisen in other parts of the former Soviet Union are also of great concern. The Government believes that the focus should also be on transit and destination countries, and that more effective multilateral mechanisms are needed for combating trafficking.

1B. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MVD, NSS, Border Guards, Customs Committee, Ministry of Labor, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Welfare, Oliy Majlis (Parliament), and National Women's Affairs Committee are involved in anti-trafficking efforts. Mahallas (neighborhood government associations) and Government-sponsored youth organizations also take part in prevention efforts.

1C. In 2006 there was an increase in newspaper articles, television programs, and radio shows discussing trafficking in persons. In December 2006, for example, a Government-produced television program titled "Victims of Fraud" aired several times in Uzbek and Russian on national television. It featured a trafficker named Zulfiya Rajapova confessing to having trafficked young women to the UAE via Osh, Kyrgyzstan. In November 2006 a program produced in cooperation with the NSS and MVD discussed trafficking cases in Navoi Province, and included extensive interviews with Government officials. It also aired on multiple occasions in Uzbek and Russian during prime time.

The state radio also continued airing awareness campaigns that are sponsored jointly by the MVD and IOM, particularly in the regions. Regional television stations worked with NGOs to air informational public service announcements (PSAs) regarding the dangers of TIP and to advertise ten regional TIP hotlines run by the NGOs. An NGO in Surkhondarya received an Embassy Democracy Commission grant to conduct radio PSAs raising awareness about trafficking. The Government likewise cooperated with NGOs and allowed them to place posters warning about the dangers of TIP on public buses, passport offices, in subway cars, and consular

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sections abroad. The Government has likewise paid to translate these posters into the Karakalpak language and distribute them for those living in the westernmost region of Uzbekistan. The Government permitted NGOs to advertise ten regional TIP hotlines on local television stations. As a result of these awareness campaigns, IOM's ten hotlines were deluged with a total of 16,406 calls during 2006. The majority of these calls were inquiries about employment abroad, and IOM sources said that 1,312 callers specified trafficking in their calls. The GOU also jointly runs awareness programs in schools and colleges. Many schools have cooperated with a local NGO to hold summer camps on raising awareness of trafficking.

Consequently, the GOU formed "coordinating units" in Nukus, Termez, Jizzak, Navoi, Bukhara, Samarkand, Syrdarya Province, and a joint unit for Namangan and Andijon. These units combine the efforts of NGOs and the government and include representatives from the MVD, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, Prosecutor's Office, and local NGOs. Religious leaders in Jizzak Province have also been trained to speak out against trafficking in persons. Imams

have mentioned the dangers of trafficking during Friday prayers.

¶D. The Government has participated in numerous training events and seminars involving MFA, MVD, NSS, and Prosecutor's Office personnel, as well as the Women's Committee and the national Government-sponsored youth organization Kamolot. On February 22-23, 2007, a local NGO conducted a highly successful INL-funded training for MVD anti-TIP department heads from around the country. The same NGO has also conducted a wide range of trainings for neighborhood officials and Women's Committee representatives, holding 13 workshops in January 2007 and 20 in February 2007. The Government likewise supports educational programming via state-controlled mass media and informational posters in public and Government spaces.

¶E. The Government cooperates with TIP-focused NGOs. GOU officials have publicly acknowledged TIP-focused NGOs as partners and have asked for their cooperation in preventing trafficking, prosecuting traffickers, and protecting the trafficked.

¶F. (SBU) The Government receives border security assistance from a variety of U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of State and Defense. However, its borders remain poorly guarded and vulnerable to traffickers. Corruption is endemic at all levels, and paying bribes is common. There are anecdotal accounts of drug traffickers bribing customs and border officials, and it is likely that these same officials would turn a blind eye to human trafficking as well. The Government has directed border guards at airports to give more scrutiny to unaccompanied young women traveling to the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Israel, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia, authorizing them to deny such women permission to leave the country. However, the majority of Border Guards and Customs officials are not

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well trained in how to detect victims and prevent TIP, and many still deny that Uzbekistan has a TIP problem.

¶G. (SBU) The interagency Anti-TIP Working Group, composed of representatives from the MVD, NSS, and Prosecutor's Office, has been dormant since May 2005. The MVD also has a specialized Anti-TIP Unit devoted to prosecution and prevention, according to MVD sources. The Government has cooperative agreements with the Governments of Russia, Germany, China and India. These agreements allow for cooperation on a range of issues, including anti-trafficking. The GOU has said that it has cooperative relationships with the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan on the trafficking issue. An alliance treaty signed by the GOU and Russia in November 2005 provides for cooperation in the struggle against illegal migration, including "illegal transport of persons." The Government works with Interpol Tashkent, OSCE Tashkent, and IOM to prevent and monitor trafficking.

¶H. The Government has developed a draft national action plan on TIP, which it planned to include as part of its new anti-TIP legislation. The MVD, NSS, MFA, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health, Supreme Court, Ministry of Education, General Prosecutor's Office, and NGOs were involved in its development. However the draft is still sitting with the Presidential Apparatus, and has not been finalized or signed. MVD sources have repeatedly expressed the need for such legislation in order to more effectively execute their duties. Amendments to Article 135 of the Criminal Code (The Recruitment of People for Exploitation), submitted to the Presidential Apparatus in summer 2005, remain unsigned, and have yet to be presented in Parliament.

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

¶A. The law prohibits all crimes associated with trafficking, including trafficking of minors, and provides for penalties of five to eight years imprisonment for trafficking-related crimes. At present the Uzbek Criminal Procedure Code addresses several trafficking-related offenses. The most common charge is Article 135 (The Recruitment of People for Exploitation). The Government reported that additional offenses that have been or can be used in TIP prosecutions included Article 137 (Kidnapping); Article 138 (Forced Illegal Imprisonment); Article 209 (Official Forgery); Article 210 (Reception of Bribe) and Article 211 (Giving of a Bribe). Recruitment for trafficking is punishable by 6 months to 3 years' imprisonment and fines of up to approximately 1,900,000 soum (approximately \$1,520). The recruitment charge could be levied against international or domestic traffickers. All law enforcement agencies are charged with upholding the anti-trafficking provisions of the criminal code. The current laws are not adequate to cover the full scope of TIP, and specific anti-trafficking legislation has been under review in the Presidential Apparatus since early 2005, according to GOU sources. The

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Parliament did not discuss any specific TIP legislation in ¶2006.

¶B. Trafficking-related crimes come with penalties of between five to eight years in prison. However, under proposed amendments to the criminal code submitted to the Presidential Apparatus in early 2005, sentences would range from 10 to 15 years. MVD officials have said that these proposed amendments are critical to ensuring that convicted traffickers are not amnestied. Typically, amnesties are extended to those convicted of "light" crimes, meaning those with prison terms less than ten years. Under the proposed amendments, therefore, traffickers would no longer be amnestied. MVD officials have expressed frustration at convicting traffickers and then seeing them amnestied. Another reason that traffickers receive amnesties is because the majority of them are women, who receive an automatic amnesty for their first offense.

¶C. There are no specific penalties for labor trafficking offenses. However, someone using deceptive recruitment practices could be eligible for prosecution under other laws dealing with trafficking-related crimes.

¶D. Penalties for sexual assault range from three to seven years imprisonment. Sexual assault of a person under 14 years of age is punishable by 15 to 20 years in prison. Sexual assault by multiple persons carries up to 15 years.

¶E. According to the Uzbek Criminal Code, prostitution is not criminalized. However, owning and operating brothels, as well as pimping, are criminalized.

¶F. The Government has not provided detailed statistics on 2006 trafficking prosecutions, other than to state that law enforcement officials prosecuted "tens" of traffickers for TIP-related crimes. According to the Government, 148 people were convicted for TIP-crimes in 2005, which according to the Prosecutor's Office had represented a significant increase over the three previous years (147 total). In 2005 the MVD registered 250 crimes under Article 135 (recruiting people for exploitation), adding that 268 people were detained on the basis of these crimes, and that 675 people were recognized as victims. In 2005 the GOU stated that TIP activity related to sexual exploitation was growing, as evidenced by the fact that 196 of the total number of victims that year were sexually exploited. Many convicted traffickers do not serve complete sentences; they are amnestied. Amnesties are typically extended to those convicted of "light" crimes ("light" under the Uzbek system means those with prison terms less than ten years) and women. Since the present trafficking-related sentences range from

5-8 years and the majority of convicted traffickers are women, convicted traffickers often receive amnesties.

¶G. Information to date suggests that some trafficking operations are small scale. Traffickers have been known to pose as business people. In the majority of cases, the trafficker is known to the victim or is introduced to the

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victim by relatives or friends. The majority of traffickers are women. NGOs have reported scant information about local-level Government officials' involvement in trafficking-related bribery and fraud. There are no reports of profits from trafficking being channeled to armed groups, terrorist organizations, judges, banks, etc.

¶H. The Government actively investigated cases of trafficking in 2006, but does not provide details on techniques. The NSS and MVD may use electronic surveillance, undercover operations, and mitigated punishment or immunity techniques if properly authorized. The criminal code does not prohibit the police from engaging in covert operations.

¶I. Due to lack of resources and skills, training usually requires the support of the United States, NGOs, various embassies, and international organizations.

¶J. The Government has cooperative relationships and agreements with several countries and is party to the Minsk Convention. The Government works very closely with Interpol Tashkent on combating TIP. The GOU readily acknowledges that it needs more cooperative relationships and agreements with countries of destination in order to more effectively prosecute trafficking. MVD officers have expressed strong interest in strengthening their relations with counterparts in Russia, Kazakhstan and the UAE. Through an INL-funded program, IOM plans to organize meetings to help build these connections.

¶K. There are no known requests for extradition of accused traffickers. The Government has extradition agreements with several countries. The Government may extradite its citizens to another country if there is a bilateral extradition treaty in place.

¶L. The Government is not tolerant of trafficking. NGOs have obtained anecdotal information regarding low level, local corruption usually involving forged or fake travel documents or marriage certificates.

¶M. There is no evidence of direct Government involvement in trafficking. However, some Government employees may have accepted bribes from traffickers to facilitate their operations. According to unconfirmed information from NGOs, local officials have falsified or sold travel documents in the past. These allegations usually involve the issuance of exit visas. There is scant information from NGOs alleging that, at the local level, individual police officers have received bribes from traffickers. According to a February 2007 report in the newspaper "Hurriyat," Lieutenant Colonel Jalol Khodjiev, an investigator at the Ministry of Internal Affairs branch at Tashkent Airport, was sentenced to ten years in prison for demanding a \$500 bribe from a repatriated victim of trafficking.

¶N. Uzbekistan does not have an identified child sex tourism problem.

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¶O. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography is still under consideration by the Government. The Government has signed and ratified the UN

Convention Against Transnational Crime and the Protocol on Trafficking. It was signed on December 13, 2000. On June 28, 2001, Uzbekistan signed the Protocol on Trafficking. The Government has also signed the Protocol on Illegal Trafficking of Migrants. In addition, the Government ratified two TIP-related ILO Conventions: the 1930 Forced Labor Convention (No 29) and the 1957 Convention on Abolition of Forced Labor (No 105). Uzbekistan ratified these on July 12, 1992, and December 15, 1997, respectively.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

1A. The Government provides no direct support to victims within Uzbekistan. The Government lacks funding for such support. We have learned that a preliminary dialogue has begun between the Government and International Organization for Migration. The Government has told the Embassy that it is interested in investigating the possibility of supporting Tashkent's shelter for victims of trafficking. This would be a positive step. Tashkent's shelter is currently funded by USAID and operated by IOM through a local NGO. The Foreign Ministry assists victims in returning to Uzbekistan from abroad. Airport police contact a women's NGO in Tashkent when they identify suspected trafficking victims or in cases of the return of known female deportees. The Tashkent shelter housed 73 victims in 2006 (and provided assistance to 10 other victims who lived outside the shelter).

1B. The Government lacks funding for widespread support for victims.

1C. The NGO Istiqbolli Avlod ("Future Generation"), as well as IOM, are in regular contact with Consular and airport officials regarding returning TIP victims. Their staffs are regularly allowed to greet and assist returning victims. Since the opening of the Tashkent victims' shelter in December 2004, IOM has provided victims with more long-term assistance. IOM and Istiqbolli Avlod reported assisting 681 trafficking victims in 2006, of whom 473 returned to Uzbekistan. (Note: This figure is double the number of victims IOM assisted in 2005. End note.) IOM officials are also in regular contact with Uzbek consular officials in the UAE, Thailand, Turkey, Malaysia and China.

1D. Trafficking victims are not jailed or prosecuted. Upon arrival, victims are typically allowed a few days to rest before filing police reports. However, victims are requested to sign documentation stating that they left the country illegally, but they are immediately amnestied and not charged with this crime. The Prosecutor's Office and the MVD have reported that they recognize the importance of not treating victims as criminals. Various training sessions, which emphasize the victim-based approach, have also allowed

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investigation level officers to see the value of the victim's testimony.

1E. The Government encourages victims to give statements and assist with investigations. MVD officials have made clear that voluntary cooperation of victims is critical to building trafficking cases. Victims may seek civil redress, file civil suits, and/or seek legal action against traffickers. There are no formal programs in place to effectively protect victims who might be material witnesses. There is no victim restitution program.

1F. The Government provides minimal protection to victims or witnesses. Government officials have visited one NGO's office and provided guidance to returned victims about answering the phone and questions from strangers. An MVD officer has also provided victims with his cellular phone number to call in case of an emergency.

¶G. The Government, in general, does not provide specialized training to its personnel in recognizing or aiding TIP victims. In February 2007, the heads of all MVD anti-trafficking departments participated in an INL-funded training implemented by a local NGO. In January-February 2007 neighborhood committees and Women's Committee officials also received training. The Government regularly provided in-kind contributions for training, such as venues and transportation for NGO representatives. IOM officials speak with Uzbek Consuls abroad at least once a week.

¶H. The Government provides little financial assistance to repatriated nationals who are victims of trafficking. The government does, however, assist victims in returning to Uzbekistan. According to Uzbek law, girls under the age of 18 qualify for assistance during repatriation, but the sums are small. In February we learned that the Government had begun a preliminary dialogue with the International Organization for Migration about the possibility of the Government supporting Tashkent's shelter for victims of trafficking. As of the drafting of this report however, no concrete assistance has yet been provided.

¶I. NGOs working with trafficking victims include IOM, Istiqbolli Avlod, and a variety of OSCE grantees. As of February 2007, IOM provided airfare to return 67 victims to Uzbekistan from various countries. According to Istiqbolli Avlod, they have assisted 681 trafficking victims' in 2006, of which 473 returned to Uzbekistan. IOM provides a shelter for victims that is staffed by a full time doctor and psychologist and part time trainers to assist them in their repatriation. Cooperation between certain local NGOs and the local authorities remains strong; IOM and other TIP-focused NGOs are in close, regular contact with GOU officials, meeting returning victims at the airport and assisting them with their readjustment.

PURNELL